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English Language for Teachers (EL4T): a course for EFL teachers

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An English Language for Teachers (EL4T) course for EFL teachers



The Open University

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Harmonising ESP practice in EFL contexts through curricular innovation

TESOL 2013 EFLIS-ESPIS Academic Session

TESOL 2013 International Convention, Dallas, Texas 20 – 23 March 2013

Overview

- Bangladeshi ELT context
- The EIA project
- The need for EL4T (needs analysis)
- EL4T materials development
- Educational technologies
- Types of materials developed
- Materials dissemination
- Preliminary findings
- Conclusion and implications



Bangladeshi context: ELT

- English language curriculum: compulsory from Grade 1 to tertiary level
- Revised school English language curriculum (2000)
- Generally Bangla used to teach English
- Limited or little interaction in English
- Listening and speaking skills not assessed
- A heavy focus on grammar
- ‘Teaching to the front’
- Teachers’ English language level at CEFR Level A2 or below (Baseline studies, English in Action 2008)



The English in Action (EIA) project

- Funded (£50m/ \$85m) by DfID UKAid for 9 years (2008 – 2017) to reach 25m Bangladeshis
- **Project Partners:** Working closely with GoB, BMB Mott MacDonald, OU, BBCWST & 2 local NGOs (UCEP and FIVDB)
- **Goal:** contribute to the economic growth of the country by providing communicative English language as a tool for better access to the world economy.
- **Purpose:** significantly increase the number of people able to communicate in English, to levels that enable them to participate fully in economic and social activities and opportunities. [*EIA project memorandum*]

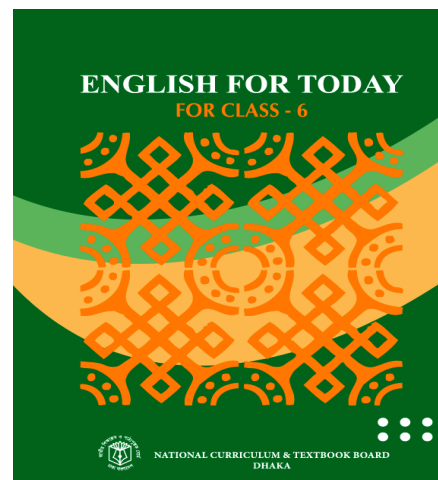
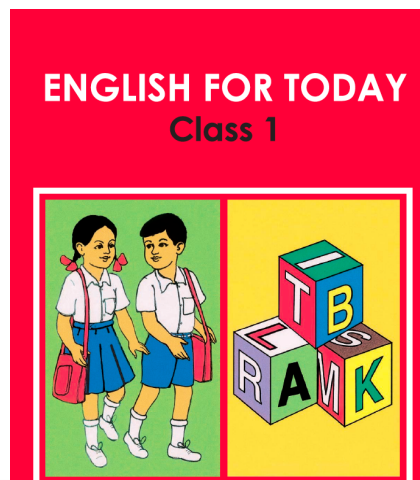
Four phases of EIA

- Phase I (2007 - 08): Design of the project
- Phase II 2008 – 2011
(Developmental research):
approx. 700 teachers
- Phase III 2011 – 2014 (Scaling up):
12,500 teachers
- Phase IV 2014 - 2017
(Embedding): 87,500+ teachers



Why English Language for Teachers (EL4T)?

- Need for teachers to have a certain level of English language proficiency (Richards 2010)
- EIA project teachers still struggling to use English in their classrooms (Shrestha, in press)
- Required level of teachers' proficiency as reflected in the national textbooks – B1 at CEFR
- Majority of teachers' level as reflected by the Trinity College London oral assessment – A1 – A2
- Approximately 87,000 teachers needing English language development by 2017



The needs analysis process

- Contextual knowledge (socio-cultural, political, educational)
- Teacher workshops
- Trinity College London assessment (oral) – localised assessment for Bangladeshi teachers
- *English for Today* textbook analysis
- Specialist discourse: English language for teachers

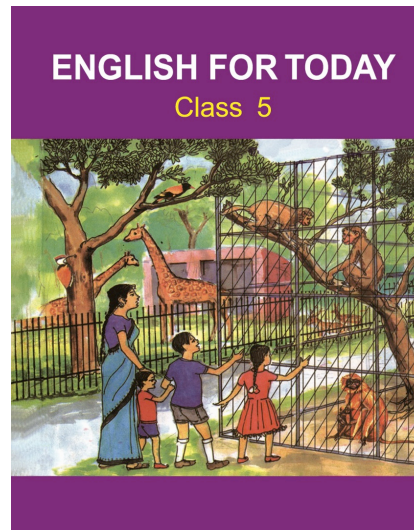
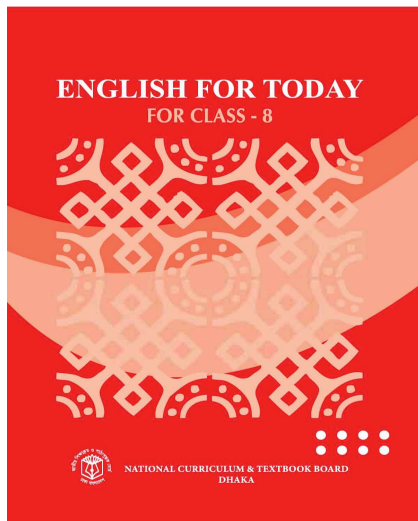
EL4T materials development (1)

The purpose:

- to develop teachers' communicative English – primarily in the areas of speaking and listening, while enhancing reading & writing.

The focus:

- Functional English language, structures and vocabulary of direct relevance to classroom teaching and the national textbook series, *English for Today*.



EL4T materials development (2)

The pedagogy:

- To reflect the communicative pedagogy of English in Action (ie using mobile devices for self study, with scope for group work in local Cluster meetings)

The brief:

- To develop two new sets of **bilingual** (English-Bangla) resources: one relating to the EIA Primary Teaching and Learning Programme (PTLP), another to the EIA Secondary Teaching and Learning Programme (STLP). Each set of resources to comprise 30 study units (Learning Activities) of approx. 2 hours' duration.

EL4T materials development (3)

- Need for 'inducting' authors into writing open & distance learning materials
- 8 Bangladeshi authors and 2 UK authors
- 3 face-to-face workshops of 5 days each in Bangladesh (Feb – April 2011)
- Collaborative, dialogic process (one-on-one)
- Professional development of writers
- Use of local artists' voices in the audio

EL4T materials development: Comments of authors

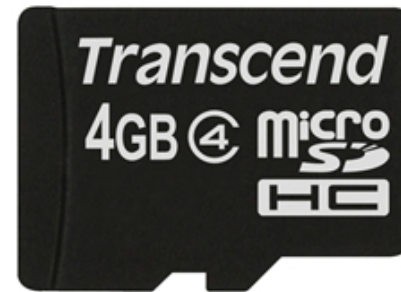
- I am used to workshops, but this was different. We learned how to write materials in a structured but creative way. It involved a new way of thinking. I had to make it interactive. I had to develop a new perspective.
- Initially I was confused, but I learned a lot. I needed to use all my imagination and creativity.
- I learned how to target the same audience from different angles. I'm now aware of how much work goes into materials development.
- Our personal insights are transferable. I feel I will be able to apply these innovative techniques to my future work.



Technologies for EL4T

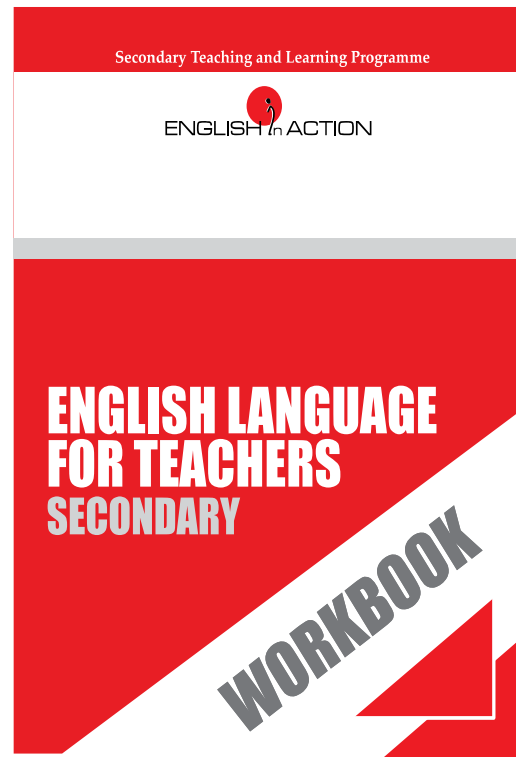
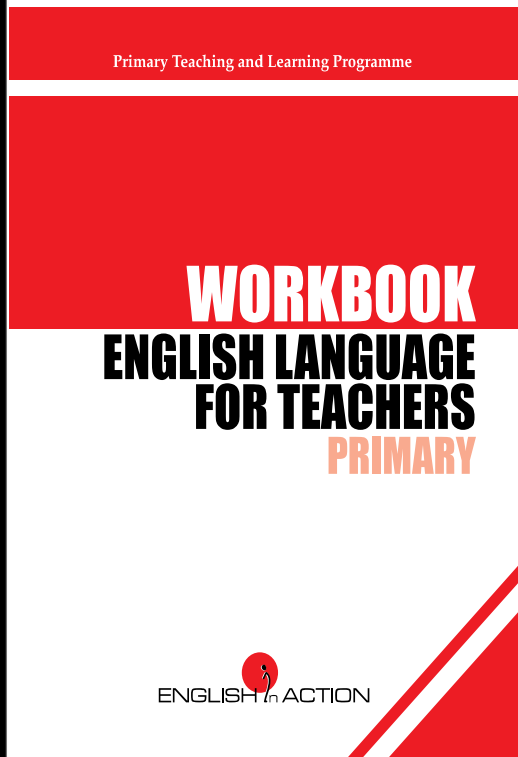
Technologies freely supplied to teachers:

- Nokia C1 mobile phones ('trainer in the pocket') – (£40)
- Micro Secure digital (SD) cards – 4GB (£7)



The materials

- EL4T: Primary Teaching and Learning Programme (60 hours)
- EL4T: Secondary Teaching and Learning Programme (60 hours)
- Structure: Audio – Print/ Audio – Classroom



Materials dissemination

Launched in June 2012

- 4,500 teachers through 80 workshops

2013 June – October

- 8,000 teachers through 170 workshops

Preliminary findings

- Materials used by 4,500 teachers across Bangladesh (2012/13)
- Recent survey of 18 secondary teachers:
 - all found the link between EL4T and *English for Today* useful
 - All reported EL4T helped to improve their own English
- Recent survey of 38 primary teachers:
 - All teachers listened to the EL4T audios
 - 97% (37) of them reported to have listened to EL4T to improve their English

Conclusion and implications

- Necessity to develop an ESP course considering the local socio-cultural and linguistic context
- ESP courses developed in English-speaking countries unlikely to work in EFL contexts
- Without enhancing teachers' language proficiency pedagogical training alone not sufficient
- Curricular innovation such as the use of mobile technologies increasing chances of an ESP course being successful in EFL contexts
- Need for aligning ESP for English teachers (e.g., EL4T) with the English language curriculum they teach
- Change (including classroom practices): a slow and dynamic process
- Further data collection required to gain better insights into the use of the materials (longitudinal study)
- Necessity to integrate the project with the current education system for any systemic change

Questions and comments?

More information from:

Shrestha (in press)

Shrestha (2012)

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